الطلاب الإسلامية و الآداب

Islamic Students and Etiquette

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS BY A MASTER OF THE UWAYSI SUFI TRADITION



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لا یشبع المؤمن من خیر حتی یکون منتهاه الجنة

قد قضی مصنف الکتاب طول حیاته بمعنی الحدیث المنقول مخلصا متفانیا في خدمة السنة و اهلها وقاهرا مجاهدا في قمع البدعة و اهلها حتی توفي الی رحمة ربه الرحیم بعد صلاة الفجر یوم الخمیس 15 رمضان الکریم 1431هـ

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بسم اللّٰه الرحمن الرحیم

الحمد للّٰه وحده و الصلوة و السلام علی من لا نبي بعده

و علی آله و اصحابه اجمعین

الطلاب الإسلامية و الآداب

Islamic Students and Etiquettes

In the present age, the educator is not given his due right in reverence and honour [by students], despite being the means by which the *Ahl al-'Ilm* reach their prestige. One must necessarily and unavoidably fulfil this due right. The pauper (Shaykh al-Uwaysī) intends to explain some points from the Blessed Traditions (*al-Aĥādīth al-Mubāraka*):

It is narrated from Abū Dā'ūd: The Prophet ﷺ declared: "It is from the veneration of Allah to honour the elderly, the scholar, the carrier of the Qur'ān [not Jāfī or Ghālī], and the just ruler, *and the teacher/scholar*."[1]

Ibn 'Abbās رضي اللّٰه عنهما was a relative of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Once Zayd Ibn Thābit رضي اللّٰه عنه was travelling by horseback to *al-Madīnah al-Munawwara*, whilst Ibn 'Abbās رضي اللّٰه عنهما walked alongside - holding the bridle. It was asked why he would do such a thing. [Ibn 'Abbās رضي اللّٰه عنهما responded: "This is how we have been taught to treat our scholars and elders".][2]

[1] Sunan Abī Dā'ūd, al-Adab, 4843; Bayhaqī, Shu'ab al-Imān, 71st Branch, 10237-10241; Ibn Abī Shaybah, Muşannaf, al-Jihād, 4786; Bazzār, Musnad Abī Mūsā, 2718. A *Ĥasan* according to al-'Irāqī and al-Nawawī (as per their works: Takhrīj al-Iĥyā, 1862; Riyāđ al-Şāliĥīn, 354, respectively)
This Ĥadīth does not include the italicized words "the teacher/scholar" at its end. However, Mulla 'Alī al-Qārī notes in his commentary on *Mishkāt al-Maşābīĥ* that the words "carrier of the Qur'ān" are also accepted to mean the scholar, the exegete and the memorizer, (Qārī, Mirqāt al-Mafātīĥ, al-Adab, 4972). Therefore, the author added it in way of commentary.

[2] To this, Zayd Ibn Thābit رضي اللّٰه عنه responds: "Show me your hand?" He took it, kissed it and declared: "This is how we have been instructed to deal with the *Ahl al-*

It is transmitted with an authentic chain from Mawlā 'Alī al-Murtađā كرم الله وجهه : "He who taught me a single letter, he is my master (*Mawlay*), I am his servant and if my master wishes he can sell me, keep me or set me free."[3]

The teacher has such high esteem because he enriches the student with the jewels of Sacred Knowledge, the treasures of Sacred Knowledge having such vastness and depth that its measure is known only by Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.

One must remember that what is referred to as Sacred Knowledge here is the knowledge of the Qur'ān and *Ĥadīth*. As for material knowledge, however important it maybe in its own right, it is there only to earn ones bread and as a source of income. The Engineer and Contractor fulfil their duties and work to earn a living.

These kinds of work terminate at time of death; no such thing is carried forward past the grave except for Sacred Knowledge. Sacred Knowledge is the only thing that does not seize but to remain by ones side from grave to resurrection.

Grading between Sacred and Material Knowledge

Mawlā 'Alī كرم الله وجهه was once asked on what was of greater rank; wealth or Sacred Knowledge. He replied that wealth in comparison to Sacred Knowledge has no genuine significance at all.

Bayt of our Prophet ﷺ". (Ibn 'Asākir, Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq, Vol: 26, p.372, Musnad Zayd Ibn Thābit)

[3] There is a Ĥadīth with similar meaning to this *Athar*. See footnote: 25

1. The one who has more money has more enemies. The more wealth increases so does the number of enemies. However, the one with more Sacred Knowledge has more friends.
2. The possessors of wealth must personally arrange protection for their wealth. However, Sacred Knowledge is the protector of the possessors of Sacred Knowledge (*Ahl al-'Ilm*).
3. The more you spend wealth the more it decreases. However, Knowledge is increased with distribution. The more you share it the more it multiplies.
4. Having wealth is not a matter of pride, for it is also the legacy of *Fir'awn* and Nimrod. Whereas, Sacred Knowledge is the legacy of His Excellency ﷺ.
5. Wealth in general creates treachery and obstinacy in man. Whereas, Sacred Knowledge trains one in modesty and humility.
6. If Sacred Knowledge is used correctly then it can even make the heads of rulers bow [in humbleness] before the carriers of Sacred Knowledge (*Ahl al-'Ilm*).

We have seen thousands of kings and multitudes of rulers bow their heads [in humility] before the carriers of Sacred Knowledge. Read the below narrative as one such example:

IBN 'ABD AL-MALIK IN THE PRESENCE OF 'ATA IBN ABI RABAH

The historians know too well of how authoritative and powerful the rule of Sulaymān Ibn 'Abd al-Mālik[4] was, his kingdom extended to far distant lands. When he went Ĥajj, he took his two sons with him. As he

[4] He was the seventh ruler of the Umayyad dynasty, grandson of Marwān Ibn al-Ĥakam. Ibn Sīrīn said: "may Allah be merciful to Sulaymān, he commenced his caliphate by reviving the prayer and ended it by leaving 'Umar [Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz] as his replacement." (al-Dhahabī, Siyar 'Alām al-Nubalā', Sulaymān Ibn 'Abd al-Malik)
On the day of he died, he wore a green garment and a green turban. 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz read his funeral prayer. He was much loved by the people, who would call him *Miftāĥ al-Khayr*, "the key to goodness". (Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, Year: 99)

was not very learned on the rulings and the Rites of Ĥajj (*Manāsik al-Ĥajj*), he went to the leading authority of his time, 'Aţā Ibn Abī Rabāĥ [after making his *Ţawāf*]. This was an Ethiopian black slave - who in terms of knowledge was teacher to none other than Abū Ĥanīfa.

When the ruler and his two sons arrived at his place, 'Aţā Ibn Abī Rabāĥ was praying the *Ishrāq* prayer and his prayer was very lengthy. After finishing the prayer in total humility and submission, he was informed of the arrival of the ruler but he paid him no due attention. Sulaymān Ibn 'Abd al-Mālik approached 'Aţā' Ibn Abī Rabāĥ himself [after waiting before others for his turn] and requested his answers.

[Thereafter], Sulaymān Ibn 'Abd al-Mālik instructed his sons: "Oh Son, seek (Sacred) Knowledge for such Knowledge ennobles the weak, alerts the idle and raises slaves above the ranks of kings".[5]

Shah Jahan at the court of Mazhar Jan Janan

Mazhar Jān Janān[6] was a grand master from the saints of the Sufi order of Naqshband (*al-Silsila al-Naqshbandiyya*). Due to his close contact with royalty, he was of a very delicate temperament. The emperor once came to visit him and during the meeting he became thirsty. There was a flagon covered by a plate, Mazhar Jān Janān instructed the emperor to quench his thirst from it. The emperor drank from the flagon and placed the plate over it but did so in a slightly tilted manner.

[5] Ibn al-Jawzī, Şifa al-Şafwa, *Ţabaqāt Ahl al-Makka Min al-Tābi'īn*, 'Aţā' Ibn Abī Rabāĥ.
[6] Shams al-Dīn Ĥabīb Allāh Jān Jānān al-Mazhar, born in 1699AH/1701CE. He was a contemporary and colleague of Shāh Walī Allāh and spiritual guide to the illustrious al-Qāđi Thanā' Allāh Pānīpatī, who named his celebrated *Tafsir Mazharī* after him. He was also received by the *Uwaysī* tradition and was very well known for his adherence to the Sunni creed. He was despised by the Shi'a and even wrote a beautiful defence for the ever shining companion Mu'āwiyya Ibn Abī Sufyān رضي الله عنه. He was martyred in the year 1195AH/1781CE by an extremist Shi'a zealot. Refer to his biography: *Maqāmat-e-Mazharī* by Shāh Ghulām 'Alī al-Dihlawī, Printed by: Urdu Science Board, Lahore: 1981.

Mazhar Jān Janān exclaimed: "Are you suffering from headache that you are unable to simply place the plate on the flagon correctly? What kind of an empire will you achieve?"[7]

These moments in history educate us on the difference between wealth and knowledge. If a man was to sever his head in hunt for the riches of knowledge, yet does not see reverence in an evident way he should not feel deprived, for the honours and bounties await him in the hereafter.

However, these advantages, traits and excellences cannot be achieved until one is heart-filled in due reverence and respect for his teacher, otherwise it is only wreckage and ruin that is achieved - nothing else.

The incident of Mūsā and Khiđar علیهما السلام mentioned in the Glorious Qur'ān is an excellent lesson on etiquette towards the teacher. For this reason, the author of *Tafsīr Rūĥ al-Bayān* maintains that the Shaykh and the teacher must relate this story to their *Murīd* and student.[8]

The author of *Rūĥ al-Bayān* mentions two notable instances[9]:

- A student once contended with Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī and caused him to utter against his favour: "He who is cut off from the favour of Allah". After this, [the abject student] was seen amongst the hermaphrodites, later he had his hand amputated due to theft.

Yet, there are still those who are favourable students:

- Once Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī instructed his student to jump in to a furnace and he did so immediately, the fire became a garden of coolness and peace for him.

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[7] Words of such nature were not exclaimed by anyone before an emperor nor did anyone ever have the courage to correct the emperors. This is a sign of the supremacy of knowledge over wealth and power.
[8] Ĥaqqi al-Barūsi, Tafsīr Rūĥ al-Bayān, Sūrah 18: Āyah 66
[9] Ĥaqqi al-Barūsi, Tafsīr Rūĥ al-Bayān, Sūrah 18: Āyah 78

Alas! Where are such students today? In today's time students rarely pay any respect to their teachers, no more so than ordinary associates or common friends. Rather, [the students meet their teacher] as some general worldly acquaintance met on the street whilst heavily deducting from the [essential] etiquette and reverence that is vital for the teacher.

I asked a fellow on why they act in such a manner. He replied: "In the present day, it is deemed against one's self-respect (*Ta'azzuz al-Nafs*)".

I heard this newfangled phrase of *Ta'azzuz al-Nafs* and was bewildered [by it], so I asked: "What monstrous thing is this *Ta'azzuz al-Nafs*?"

He replied: "It is the name given to the preservation of one's own self-respect. It is such that when we "raise the flags of arrival" for the teachers in their honour, our followers begin to think we are scholars of some lowly-level and consequently our status in the eyes of the public begins to fall."

I said to him: "Alas! If you revere the one through whom you reached your honour then in return your honour will further increase and multiply. But your [current] pseudo-reverence and respect is nothing in reality but total lack of it."

This illness is full spirited amongst the Imāms and Sermonisers of *Masājid* in Bāb al-Madīnah, Karāchī. It is for this reason that in comparison to the Imāms, Sermonisers and *Mu'adhinūn* in other cities, their particular respect is continuously waning. *Illa Ma Sha' Allah*

There are countless traditions from His Excellency, Sovereign of the Cosmos ﷺ of which this pauper (Shaykh al-Uwaysī) has collated in his work *"al-'Asal al-Lazīz Fi Ādāb al-Talmīz"*.

I present one such instruction below:

> The Prophet ﷺ said: "Have humility before the one from whom you take knowledge, and have humility before the one you teach, and do not be towering scholars."[10] [11]

Imām Abū Yūsuf said: "Whoever did not recognise the worth of his teacher did not prosper."

Imām Mughīra [Ibn Muqsim] revealed: "We were afraid of [our teacher] Ibrahim [al-Nakha'i] in the manner by which one fears the ruler."[12]

Alexander the Great was once questioned as to why he gave preference to his teacher Aristotle over his own father. He replied: "My father brought me from the heavens to the earth while my teacher Aristotle took me from the earth [back in] to the heavens; likewise my father is the reason for my expiring life while my teacher is the reason for my everlasting life."

When Imām al-Shāfi'ī would study before Imām Mālik he would be very careful in turning the page before his esteemed teacher, ensuring that it doesn't make any audible noise.[13]

Imām Ĥammād Ibn Abī Sulaymān was the renowned teacher to Imām Abū Ĥanīfa. It is the account of his wife that Imām Abū Ĥanīfa would do the shopping for their groceries for thirty years. Considering that this might seem as a very lowly duty for the illustrious Imām, she tried to prevent him but Imām Abū Ĥanīfa would reply, "This is but my good fortune, why would I cease [such opportunity]?"

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[10] al-Suyūţī, al-Jāmi' al-Şaghīr, 3381 - *Ĥarf al-Ţā'*. Imām al-Dhahabī mentions that the actual narration is attributable to Sayyiduna 'Umar and is not *Marfū'*.

[11] Imām al-Munāwī notes in his commentary *Fayđ al-Qadīr* that the wise men have said: "He who did not bear the humility of study for a moments' length remained in the humility of ignorance forever".

[12] al-Dhahabī, Siyar 'Alām al-Nubalā', Ibrahīm al-Nakha'ī.

[13] al-Nawawī, al-Majmū' Sharĥ al-Muhaddhab, *Muqaddima*.

The great Naqshbandī master Mirza Mazhar Jān Janān was the student of Shaykh Muĥammad Afđal in [the Science of] *Ĥadīth*. He relates how on the departing of his Shaykh he was gifted the inner hat beneath the turban:

> "For fifteen years, I kept that hat beneath my turban. After some time, I decided to wash it. I soaked it in hot water in the night, I brushed and scrubbed it. The colour mixed in to the water, but out of respect and reverence I drank the remnant to avoid waste. Due to its blessing, countless doors of knowledge unlocked for me."

The teacher of the author of *al-Hidāya*, Shams al-A'imma al-Ĥalwānī was once to travel from *Bukhāra* to another town. All students visited him except for Imām al-Zarnajrī. When he met him, he asked: "Why did you not visit me?" He replied, "I was busy in serving my mother". Shaykh al-Ĥalwānī said, "You will see increase in your age but will not find brilliance in teaching". It is mentioned in *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim* that this is what happened, he would live in various towns but would more than often have no lessons organised for him [to teach].[14]

There was an Imām from the major Imāms of *Bukhāra* that would arrange an assembly of learning. He would stand at times during the lesson, so the students asked about this. He replied: "The son of my teacher is playing with youngsters in the street. He comes towards the door of the *Masjid* at times, when I see him I stand in reverence for my teacher."[15] This shows that reverence for the children of the teacher is also included within the reverence for the teacher.

Al-Qāđī al-Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Arsābandī was the leader of the Imams of his age*, the Sultan would offer him the highest form of veneration.

[14] al-Zarnūjī, Ta'līm al-Muta'allim Fī Ţarīq al-Ta'allum, Chapter 4: On venerating knowledge and its carriers.
[15] Ibid.

He would say, "I came to reach this position due to my service to the teacher, for indeed I would serve the teacher al-Qāđī al-Imām Abū Zayd al-Dabūsī and cook his food for him for thirty years but would not eat from it [out of respect]."[16]

It is related that the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd sent his son to Imām al-Aşma'ī so that he could teach him knowledge and etiquette. He saw him one day doing *Wuđū* and washing his feet whilst the son of the Caliph poured water over his foot. The Caliph reprimanded Imām al-Aşma'ī saying: "I sent him specifically for you to educate him and teach him etiquette then why did you not order him to pour water with one hand and wash the foot with the other?[17]

Imām al-Rabī' [Ibn Sulaymān] said: "By Allāh, I did not have the courage to drink water whilst al-Shāfi'ī was looking at me, [acknowledging] his esteemed personality."[18]

Guidance to the Teacher:

1. The rank of the teacher is one of high esteem, value and station in every sense. The attributes and behaviours of the teacher should be such that he must be the complete and manifest form of virtue and piety. Just by seeing him, the sketch of the sacred bounty of knowledge should be engraved in to the heart of the student.
2. The teacher who is not able to remove bad habits by presenting good habits is not deserving of this title. The work of the teacher is to progress the intelligence and produce virtuous habit. It is true of what one said: "Do not make children in to vessels which drift in to the sea, lest they are driven by you alone. Rather, train them to steer ahead by their own ability."

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] al-Nawawī, al-Majmū' Sharĥ al-Muhaddhab, *Muqaddima*.

It is incumbent upon the student to adopt utmost humility and modesty [before the teacher]. He should try to transform his teacher's sternness in to leniency by good service and fine obedience; he will receive the sacred bounty of his teacher.

Imām Ibn 'Uyaynah was of a very firm character. [Imām al-Shāfi'ī narrated that] it was once asked to Imām Sufyān Ibn 'Uyaynah: "Indeed people come to you from various towns while you are very stern towards them. This could result in them leaving or departing from you". He replied: "Are they fools like you that they should leave what benefits them due to my strict manner?" [19]

Guidance to the Student:

1. It is the dictum of Imām Abū Yūsuf, "the reverence of the teacher should be such that if the teacher explains a point which the student already knows, he should not make it apparent before the teacher."
2. It is the guidance of our elders that one must not sit side by side with the teacher. Even if the teacher requests it, the student should hold back. However, if this would cause upset to the teacher then there is no loss [in doing so]. *Al-Amr Fawq al-Adab*

Reverence and good etiquette towards the teacher is incumbent in every sense. All the lofty *Mashā'ikh* and upright scholars that have passed have attained their high stations, sacred bounties and blessings through good service to their teachers and by the carrying of their shoes.

For more detail please refer to this pauper's (Shaykh al-Uwaysī) other writings on the same subject: *al-'Asal al-Lazīz Fī Ādāb al-Talmīz, al-Malāz Fī Ādāb al-Talmīz Wa al-Ustāz* and *Tuĥfa al-Aĥbāb Fī Muţāla'a al-Kitāb*.:

[19] Ibn Jamā'ah, Tadhkira al-Sāmi' Wa al-Mutakallim, al-Faşl al-Thānī, No. 5.

Imām Aĥmad Riđā, the *Muĥaddith* of Baraylī, may Allah ﷻ sanctify his secret said:

> The teacher adorns with the jewels of knowledge, therefore its appreciation becomes binding. It is mentioned in a noble tradition: “He, who does not thank the people, has not thanked Allah.”[20] And it is also mentioned by Abū Dā’ūd, who also authenticates [the narration], that it has been narrated from Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “He does not thank Allah, who does not thank the people.”[21]

Who is better than the teacher, for he has endowed the student with such a magnificent blessing? The textual order is also found in the following *Āyah* of the Qur’an: "If you give thanks, I will give you more, and if you are ungrateful then (know that) My punishment is severe." (Sūrah Ibrāhīm: Verse 7)

From this verse, [there is indication] that the thanking of the teacher with goodness and kindness brings such folk countless blessings with the aid of Allah ﷻ. Ingratitude to the teacher becomes deprivation [of the grand mercy] and punishment in the hereafter, in addition to [further suffering] its penalty in this life too.

Whether one realizes it or not, we have experienced that those who comply with honouring and respecting their lofty teachers, receive the full share of its reward in this world by [being in receipt of] respect and honour, while the reward in the Hereafter is a separate reward by Allah.

As for those that are neglectful in respecting and honouring their teachers, they remain in the clout of dishonour and in a state of

[20] Tirmidhī, al-Birr Wa al-Şila, 1954; Aĥmad Ibn Ĥanbal, Musnad, 11493; Ţabarānī, al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, Bāb al-Jīm, 2438; Sakhāwī, al-Maqāşid al-Ĥasana, 1130.
[21] Aĥmad Ibn Ĥanbal, Musnad, 10166; Bukhārī, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 211; Ibn Ĥibbān, Rawđa al-‘Ulamā, 121; Sunan Abī Dā’ūd, Kitāb Sujūd al-Qur’ān, 4180; Musnad Abī Ĥanīfa, 257; Ţabarānī, al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, Bāb al-Alif, 520.

grovelling, without even realising it. Whilst, the punishment they receive in the Hereafter they will [surely] realise it- that yes, this punishment is the penalty due to neglecting the honour of the teacher.

His eminence, Imām Aĥmad Riđā, the erudite scholar of *Baraylī*, deduced from the verses - "We recompensed them in this way a punishment for their ungratefulness and whom so We punish is only him who is ungrateful" (Sūrah Saba': Verse 17) and "Undoubtedly Allāh loves not any arrogant boaster." (Sūrah Luqmān: Verse 18) that these are promised warnings of punishment (*Wa'īd*) for that student who has shortcomings in fulfilling the rights of his teacher.

It is also mentioned in a noble tradition: "He who has been favoured and does not find a means of recompense but praising the benefactor, then he has indeed been grateful to him, while he who conceals it has been ungrateful."[22]

The summary is thus; the teacher has bestowed jewels of knowledge unto the student and therefore its gratitude and thankfulness has become binding upon the student. He must approach the teacher with utmost respect and ennoblement, fulfil his every Islamic need and keep his tongue moist in his praise and admiration.

In this era, talk of such [a grateful student] is like that of a phoenix (i.e. somewhat mythical). There would be one student, if any at all, out of maybe a hundred thousand in this world that would be grateful to his teacher otherwise most [are unsatisfactory].

Making evident your reverence for the teacher is compulsory. It is mentioned in a noble tradition "he has indeed been grateful to him, while he who conceals it has been ungrateful". His eminence, Imām Aĥmad Riđā Khān al-Baraylawī details that denial of rights (*Ĥuqūq*) is a

[22] Aĥmad Ibn Ĥanbal, Musnad, 24033; Bukhārī, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 208; Sunan Abī Dā'ūd, Kitāb Sujūd al-Qur'ān, 4182; Saĥīĥ Ibn Ĥibbān, Kitāb al-Zakāt, 3497.

breach of consensus. Meaning, that the entire Muslim nation is united upon this [point] and the denier therefore, by deviating from the consensus, desires the course to hell.

Do not look at your teacher with the eye of belittlement, nor present yourself to him with a demeaning attitude. Imām Aĥmad Riđā al-Muĥaddith al-Baraylawī explains that the noble traditions concerning the belittlement of others are also relative to the teachers.

Oh students, take heed! Whatever attitude of belittlement we present to our teachers, it will surely return upon us one day. Rather, it shall return worse. It is well-known: "whatever you sow, you shall reap".[23]

A man taught a young boy *Sūrah al-Fātiĥa*. The young boy sent him a reward [from his father] of four thousand *Dirhams*. The man in surprise uttered, "What great did I do that you present me with such an immense reward?" The boy's father promptly removed his son from education under this man, as he felt that he had no reverence for the Qur'ān or else he would not have uttered what he did.[24]

Do not compete with your teacher, whether this is in religious matters or worldly. It is clear that by competing you aspire to defeat your teacher, and this is a form of belittlement and denigration. The misfortune of such belittlement and denigration has already been discussed.

The state of the relationship with the teacher is like that of a weak slave to his master. This is because the Blessed Traditions refer to the teacher's status as a master (*Mawlā*) and the student as a bondservant (*'Abd*).

His eminence, the Master of the world ﷺ said: "Whoever teaches a man (*'Abd*) a verse from the book of Allah, he is his master (*Mawlā*)."[25]

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[23] Similar to the Arabic saying: من زرع حصد
[24] Al-Baraylawī, al-'Aţāyah al-Nabawiyya Fī al-Fatāwa al-Riđawiyya
[25] Al-Ţabarānī, al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr, Bāb al-Şād, 7528.

Our liege-lord 'Alī al-Murtađā كرم الله وجهه said: "Whoever teaches me a [single] letter, I become his slave. If he so desires, he can sell me or if he so desires, he can set me free."

Imām Shu'bah Ibn al-Ĥajjāj declared: "From whomever I write four or five *Aĥādīth*, I am his slave until I die." Infact, he further states [in another narration] that "I do not write a single *Ĥadīth* from anyone except that I am his slave for as long as he lives".[26] [27]

[Arrogance and competition with the teacher] is against the treasured teachings of his Eminence, Sovereign of the world ﷺ.

For one to think of himself as better than the teacher [at any instance], [know that] such a student is extremely ill-fated.

[The Prophet ﷺ said:] "Seek knowledge, and seek for knowledge serenity and earnestness, and be humble before whom you take knowledge from."[28]

Imām Aĥmad Riđā al-Muĥaddith al-Baraylawī explains of the goodness received by the students, that it is the work of the fortunate to recognise its arrival only by the kindness of the teacher. Rather, if the dust beneath their teachers' feet was to brush against their faces, they would find no greater joy or honour. Such is the saying, "Oh fragrant breeze! All this has been brought by you".[29]

It is incumbent for the student not to seat himself on the teacher's resting place or cushion, even if the teacher is absent.

It is mentioned in *Radd al-Mukhtār* by Imām al-Shāmī:

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[26] al-Dhahabī, Siyar 'Alām al-Nubalā', Shu'bah; al-Qāđi 'Iyāđ, al-Ilmā', v.1 p.227.
[27] Both narrations are noted here: Sakhāwī, al-Maqāşid al-Ĥasana, 1155
[28] Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm Wa Fađlih, 570; al-Ţabarānī, al-Mu'jam al-Awsaţ, Bāb al-Mīm, 6352; al-Işbahānī, Ĥilya al-Awliyā', 9114.
[29] Translated from the well-known Persian line: ای باد صبا این همه آورده تست

> Al-Zandawīsatī said: The right of the scholar over the ignorant and the right of the teacher over the student is one and the same. It is not to open speech before him (i.e. the teacher), not to sit in his place even in his absence, not to interrupt him in his speech and neither should one walk ahead of him.[30]

It is essential for the student not to walk ahead of the teacher, nor speak before him. Infact, he must not precede him in any matter at all.

One must save himself from causing any frustration to the teacher. Rather frustrating anyone, even a commoner, is impermissible. As it is mentioned clearly in the Qur'ān and *Aĥadīth*:

> And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, they bear the guilt of slander and manifest sin. (Sūrah Aĥzāb: Verse 58)

His eminence ﷺ also declared:

> And whoever offends a Muslim, he has indeed offended me. And whoever offends me, he has indeed offended Allah.[31]

Stay many a coss[32] away from the belittlement of the teacher. One must not be envious of the teacher. He should picture the ills of envy and its humiliation suffered by the envious, and then he should draw parallels of this with the [ills of] one envious of the teacher.

One must not place his needs before the teacher's. His eminence ﷺ did not hold precedence as acceptable over general Muslims, for example He ﷺ said, "Do not arrange your engagements on the engagement of another[33], etc... In terms of rights, the teacher has the highest regard.

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[30] Ibn 'Abidīn al-Shāmī, Radd al-Muĥtār, *Kitāb al-Khunthā*, *Masā'il al-Shatta*
[31] Ţabarānī, al-Mujam al-Şaghīr, Bāb al-Sīn, 441.
[32] A unit of length in terms of land. Mostly used in the Indian sub-continent.
[33] Bukhārī, Şaĥīĥ, al-Nikāĥ, 4848; Tirmidhī, al-Nikāĥ, 1134.

One must not have any lacking in reverence and honouring of the teacher, whilst His eminence ﷺ would not be accepting of such [attitude] even for the common elderly Muslim: "He is not from amongst us who does not have mercy for our young and recognises the nobility of our seniors."[34]

One should embellish a nooklet[35] of his heart with veneration and reverence for the teacher.

The way great leaders and those with good repute are respected; the teacher has equal right. The promised warnings of punishment (*Wa'īd*) for the [negligent of their rights] and those of the teacher are akin to the one who did not fulfil the rights of the *Anṣār*. That is that the negligent is either a hypocrite (*Munāfiq*) or born of the seed placed at menstruation.[36]

The teacher is of great stature and magnificence for the student. The one with shortcoming in his due rights is as one who has transgressed the legal limits as set by Allāh (*Ĥudūd Allāh*).

The student who has shortcomings in the rights of his teacher due to some worldly agreement or an increase in his worldly status, and as such is ashamed and embarrassed at fulfilling his teacher's rights, then



[34] Tirmidhī, al-Birr Wa al-Ṣila, 1919; Ĥākim, al-Mustadrak, al-Aṭ'ima, 7432; Bukhārī, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 350; Sakhāwī, al-Maqāṣid al-Ĥasana, 883; Bayhaqī, Shu'ab al-Imān, 71st Branch, 10229-10236; Bazzār, Musnad 'Ubāda Ibn al-Ṣāmit, 2718; Sunan Abī Dā'ūd, al-Adab, 4943.

[35] Nooklet refers to a small corner or nook. Such type of metaphor is generally used in the Indian sub-continent when addressing a very fragile and delicate matter and demonstrates the level of care required in its handling.

[36] Mawlā 'Alī كرم الله وجهه narrates that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: "He who does not recognize the right of my Family and the Anṣār and the Arabs, he must be one the three; either a hypocrite, born of fornication or born of a conception during a menstruation cycle". (Ibn 'Adī, al-Kāmil, 3/1060)

[know that] he is a slaverer[37] of this world. The same punishments await him as promised for the one who seeks knowledge for material gain.

As for the student who has excelled in worldly sciences whilst his teacher is well-accomplished [only] in Sacred Knowledge: If - due to haughtiness - the student does not see his teacher in a lofty sight or comes short of fulfilling the teacher's due right, then [know] that he is extremely ill-fated.

The student's progress in worldly arts and sciences does not take preference over the teacher's Islamic Sciences. Rather, Islamic Sciences and Arts have greater regard and honour. This is why the respected jurists are united on the fact that if the expert of worldly sciences and the expert of Islamic sciences were to gather [for prayer], the expert of Islamic sciences would be entitled to lead. As such, we give preference to the rights of the teacher as an obligation.

Note: Imām Aĥmad Riđā has written on this subject in great length and detail. [One can find it] on Pages 19-25 of the modern print of *al-Fatāwa al-Riđawiyya*, Volume Ten.

The question [placed to the Imām] was thus; a *Sayyid* taught a highly respected individual Sacred Knowledge, so now this student is desirous of taking over the post of his teacher, a position of the father, in giving sermons and leading the prayers.

Imām Aĥmad Riđā responds in such depth about the rights of the teacher that the student will not waver for a moment in due veneration and reverence for his teacher and will never bring to being such an [impious] competitive mindset.

[37] Slavering is an act of drooling, negatively associated to dogs in general. It is used here to describe the act of one lusting after worldly riches.

FINAL PLEA

The discipleship of the pious predecessors in comparison to some of current students is as different as are the heavens to the earth.

The [pious] predecessors would say:

Would that I could present to you my heart, dear teacher!

Some of the current students say:

Please pass the bill, dear teacher!

It is a supplication to Allāh, the Transcendent, that He, Most-generous, give our dear ones success in following the footsteps of the pious predecessors. *Amīn*.

بجاه حبيبه الكريم الامين صلى الله عليه و على آله و اصحابه اجمعين

فقط و السلام

الفقير القادري ابو الصالح محمد فيض احمد الاويسي الرضوي غفر له

يوم الثلاثاء 9 جمادي الأولى 1422هـــــ بهاولبور، باكستان

Translation completed by Allah's mercy and grace: 18th Muĥarram al-Ĥarām 1432AH.

